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Warner Vineyards captures top honors at Chili Walk

Paw Paw Library & Chambers

G G Sweets

Dave Johnson

Don Field

Sporty's

Masonic Lodge

The fourth Annual Paw Paw Chili Walk was held Saturday Feb. 21 in Paw Paw. Taking top honors was Warner Vineyards, with runner-up honors going to GG Sweets.

The Paw Paw Fire Department captured People's Choice.

A large turnout didn't let the 30-degree temperature hamper them as they strolled the streets of Paw Paw, going in and out of the many businesses that took part in the event. Attendees took part in sampling chili, desserts, hot chocolate, entertainment, family fun and shopping sales. The event was sponsored by CC Creative Catering, GG Sweets, The Kitchen, Arbor Financial Credit Union and Destination Paw Paw.*Courier-Leader photos/Paul Garrod*

The Lucky Wolf

Brewster's

Malia's

Gobles man faces charges for selling mislabeled, unprescribed GLP1s

GOBLES - A Gobles man is facing charges for allegedly selling mislabeled and foreign-made GLP1 drugs without prescriptions.

Brandon Piper was charged in federal court Friday, Feb. 20, with one count of conspiracy to introduce misbranded drugs into interstate commerce with intent to defraud and mislead.

Federal prosecutors implicated Piper of working for a Canadian company that sold drugs to American customers from October 2023 until at least August 2024. It was at that time when he started another Michigan-based website with a Holland mailing address.

If convicted, Piper faces up to five years in prison.

Travel trailer destroyed in fire

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7:12 a.m., the Paw Paw Fire Department was dispatched to the 42000 block of M-43 Highway for a report of a fully involved garage fire. Units arrived on scene at 7:19 a.m. and reported a travel trailer fully involved with an exposure to a nearby garage. It was reported that one person was unaccounted for but was later determined not to be in the travel trailer. The fire was under control at 7:33 a.m. A total of 18 PPFD members responded. No injuries were reported and the exact cause is unknown at this time. All units cleared the scene at 8:31a.m. The Paw Paw Fire Department was assisted by the Bloomingdale and Lawton fire departments, Van Buren County Sheriff's Office and Van Buren Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Richardson said with a PPFD tanker out of service, the department called for a tanker from Bloomingdale. PPFD was on auto-aid for a tanker from Lawton.

Photo courtesy/Paw Paw Fire Department

County Commissioners seek to fill vacant seat

PAW PAW - The Van Buren County Board of Commissioners (Board) has announced it is currently accepting letters of interest for their consideration to fill the vacancy left by the death of Randall Peat.

The Board is authorized by statute to fill the vacancy no later than 30 days after Mr. Peat's passing and will be effective upon appointment scheduled for March 10, 2026. The appointment is until a successor is elected at the Nov. 3, 2026, General Election in the manner provided by law and qualified for office.

Applicants shall be at least 18 years of age, reside in and be registered to vote in District 5, Van Buren County, Michigan. District 5 is compromises Antwerp Township Precinct 3, Paw Paw Township Precinct 1, Paw Paw Township Precinct 2, Paw Paw Township Precinct 3, and Waverly Township except Bangor School District.

The Board is requesting applications to be submitted no later than 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, 2026, describing the applicant's specific qualifications for the appointment to be considered at their regular Committee of the Whole meeting Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 1 p.m. The application can be found at the Van Buren County website: www.vanburencountymi.gov. The applications can be submitted online, returned via email to admin@vanburencountymi.gov, or delivered in person or sent to the County Administrator, 219 E. Paw Paw St, Suite 302, Paw Paw, MI, 49079.

For more information about Van Buren County Government, visit the website at: www.vanburencountymi.gov.

Hettinger presents economic development plan to SH City Council

James Hettinger

By James Windell

After working for several months and holding public meetings, consultant James Hettinger appeared before the South Haven City Council on Monday, February 16, 2026 to present on update on the five-year Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Hettinger, who has been working on an updated Strategic Economic Development Plan for the City of South Haven for several months, pointed out to the City Council that since the last such plan in 2020, several significant changes in local and regional conditions have influenced the landscape of our region and economic outlook.

"Most notably, the reopening of the Palisades nuclear power plant has positively impacted employment levels, supply chain activity, and overall economic confidence within the region," he said. In addition, he pointed out that the continued rebound from the economic effects of COVID-19 has resulted in increased business activity, workforce re engagement, and renewed development interest.

However, to ensure the Strategic Plan remains responsive to current conditions, South Haven staff and Hettinger conducted three public listening sessions and one business-focused community session during 2025 to gather feedback on emerging priorities, challenges, and opportunities. Input from these sessions has helped inform some adjustments to the plan and identified new ideas to help drive the City's future economic growth.

Hettinger presented a detailed slide presentation at the City Counmcil meeting. In the presentation, he discussed how the strategic economic plan was impacted by events such as the Palisades nuclear facility closure and planned reopening, improved telecommunications infrastructure, and a regular pattern of business retention and expansion calls. He said, though, that challenges remain around building the off-season economy, with only 54% of homes occupied year-round.

The strategy, as he has developed it, now emphasizes both demographic and non-demographic (place- and asset-based) economic development. Asset-based approaches leverage unique local features like Lake Michigan, the South Haven downtown, and the existing infrastructure.

Hettinger said that there are major ongoing and future initiatives that are important. These include an inventory and profile of abandoned lots for potential housing or development use and a marine technology program at Lake Michigan College, which supports workforce development but faces accessibility challenges for low-income students. Future plans, he noted, include localizing training and scholarship support. In addition, a continued alliance with partners like MarketOne and the South Haven Regional Business Hub are valuable collaborations.

A more recent collaboration is with Western Michigan University on engineering, beach safety studies, and marine technology curriculum. Hettinger told the Council that there should be consideration of partnerships and innovations around energy (nuclear, renewable, potential data centers), climate change adaptation, and beach resilience.

Although he said that a focus on retention and expansion of existing businesses is a core strategy, that it is necessary to develop targeted strategies to build the off-season economy and make use of abandoned properties for affordable housing. He said that urgent care and daycare remain challenges in the South Haven community due to market limitations and regulatory hurdles but they should be viewed as necessary services. He proposed that the city might give thought to aspirational projects such as an experiential learning center/library and a marine technology institute.

Council members acknowledged the plan's breadth and alignment with previous strategy discussions. After his presentation there was a consensus among City Council members to bring the plan to a Committee of the Whole meeting for deeper review and to integrate feedback. Other suggestions from Council members were to incorporate input from regional partners, set more measurable data-driven goals, and factor in the total tax burden.

The Strategic Economic Plan update was approved by a roll call vote, and it is expected that there will be more discussion of the plan at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Deloa Jones tells Scott Club audience about her quilting journey

By James Windell

When Deloa Jones was a child growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania, she learned practical quilting skills from her mother. Attending quilting groups in her church, she was taught more valuable quilting skills by other ladies in her church.

Now, more than a half-century later, Jones, a South Haven resident, is a nationally recognized longarm quilter, teacher, author, and designer with decades of quilting experience.

Jones talked about her quilting journey in front of a Scott Club audience on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

"Before COVID, I was travelling doing 6 or 7 shows a year and I loved it," Jones said, "but I thought I only had so many years left in this work and I asked myself how I wanted to spend those years."

The answer she found during the COVID shutdown was that she most enjoyed sewing with friends and showing others how to increase their skills as quilters. "That's why I bought a church and turned it into a retreat center in South Haven," she said. "I wanted to promote what I love."

Prior to opening her retreat center called Hearts Gathering at 15804 M-140, South Haven, Jones published five quilting books and created numerous patterns and tools. She taught quilting across the U.S., Canada, and England, and appeared on quilting programs such as QNNTV and QuiltingSchool.com.

After quilting for many years, Jones transitioned into longarm quilting, where she built a thriving business and a strong reputation for precision, artistry, and teaching. Longarm quilting is a method of quilting that uses a large, specialized sewing machine to stitch together the three layers of a quilt – the top, batting, and backing – with speed, precision, and decorative designs. When quilters have finished creating the top layer of their quilts, they take their quilt tops to Jones for her to do the final stitching. Many of these quilts have won awards.

During her presentation for the Scott Club, Jones, who has quilted over 5,200 quilts professionally, illustrated her descriptions of quilting designs and patterns with antique quilts she's collected as well as some of her own quilts.

She emphasized the importance of relationships and community built around quilting and shared stories behind numerous antique quilts, including Civil War-era quilts and quilts from the 1930s – quilts which used such patterns as Carolina Lily, Indian Wedding Ring, and Friendship quilts.

Jones highlighted the value of community, teaching, and creative connections fostered through quilting and the retreat center. She said that she is always intrigued by the way personal and family stories are woven into the quilts people make. "Quilts are loved most because they're made with love for someone special, underscoring the emotional heart behind the craft," she said.

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Paw Paw Fire Department makes donation to Van Buren Tech

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, the Paw Paw Fire Department delivered their old set of Rescue 42 stabilization struts to the Van Buren Tech Fire Science Program. The department recently purchased new Rescue 42 stabilization struts to replace the old set. According to Paw Paw Fire Chief Kyle Richardson, the department's new rescue struts are four times stronger, extend further and are about half the weight of the previous steel set. Richardson said rescue stabilization struts are primarily used on accident scenes for the stabilization of a vehicle that has rolled onto its side or roof. "The new rescue struts will allow emergency personnel operating on a vehicle accident scene to work safer while removing patients from a rolled over vehicle. The department was very happy to donate their old set to the Tech as they will benefit fire science students across the county in practicing vehicle stabilization. The department has also benefited from the Tech's fire science program as current department members have completed the program and felt it was a great way to give back," said Richardson.

Paw Paw Fire Department named Peoples' Choice Winner

The Paw Paw Fire Department competed in the annual Paw Paw Chili Walk, held Saturday, Feb. 21 and was awarded the "People's Choice" award. "It is a great event to enjoy friendly competition between local businesses and offers the community a chance to tour the fire station," said Paw Paw Fire Department Chief Kyle Richardson.

Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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Lawton Village Council hears update on Lawton youth baseball/softball program

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

LAWTON - The Lawton Village Council on Tuesday. Feb. 10, heard an update on the Lawton Youth Softball/Baseball program.

Doug Lawrence, president of Lawton Youth Softball/Baseball (LYSBBB) program, said registration has finished for the year, with more than 200 youth signed up. The program plans to host a couple all-star tournaments in June and is looking at the program's facility to host fall ball tournaments for a few travel teams.

Lawton Village Council President Josh Appleby brought the Special Use Permit for Pin High Golf Course to the floor for discussion. Council member Judith Peterson reviewed the discussion, with the Lawton Village Planning Commission recommending council approval for the permit. In a roll call vote, the council approved the Special Use Permit.

Lawton Village Manager Todd Hackenberg told the village council that he recently met with Market One to discuss potential projects in the village. He recently traveled to Washington, D.C. with the Michigan Rural Water Association (MRWA) to discuss USDA funding.

Hackenberg said he recently met with New Growth Group, who requested a final set of paperwork, at which point, the village should receive Michigan Economic Development Corporation funding (MEDC)

Hackenberg reported that he and Paul Harvey are going to review the CIP for replacing lead pipes in the village. He was also to meet with AFT and the Van Buren Conservation District for a potential household hazardous waste session, hosted at AFT.

Village Clerk Brittany Rathbun reported that the village is down to three or four rental inspections that are not in compliance, and awaiting to hear back if certified letters have been delivered to each of these owners.

It was reported that the Lawton Village Planning Commission recently met and following reviews, approved a site plan for HS Fleet.

Village Clerk Rathbun said Jessica Conte was recently appointed to fill a seat on the Lawton Library Board.

Village Council President Appleby expressed his thanks to the Lawton Department of Public Works for the long hours the department put in with the recent snowstorms. Appleby said DPW members moved their schedule to come in at 4 a.m., or sometimes at 2 a.m. to move snow and work through the broken equipment.

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A Van Buren County resident wins $300k in lottery

A Van Buren County man recently won $300,000 in a Michigan Lottery game.

The state Lottery Commission reported the man, whose name was not released, picked up the winning Safe Cracker Cashword ticket at the Broadway Shell station in South Haven. He recently visited the Lottery headquarters to claim his prize.

The winning individual said he buys a few Cashword tickets each week because he thinks they're fun. When he saw that he'd won $300,000, he initially did several checks. He then asked his wife to look it over, and she confirmed it.

The couple plans to save the winnings.

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OBITUARIES

Carolyn Kitzmiller

Carolyn Acenith Kitzmiller, 80, of Gobles, passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, at Hanson Hospice Center, Stevensville, MI. She was born Oct. 20, 1945, in Paw Paw, the daughter of Harold Wilder and Acenith (Johnson) Wilder.

Carolyn worked for many years at Allied Paper Mill, alongside her late husband, Barry. Carolyn enjoyed being outdoors and hunting, fishing, and watching the deer from her cabin window. She was also a talented quilter, sewer and baker. Her family was her world, and she would do anything for them. She looked forward to spending time with her beloved grandchildren.

She is survived by her stepson, Brian (Carolyn) Kitzmiller; grandchildren, Andy, Michael, Riley, Shae and Jay; great-grandchildren, Alec, Adam, Carson, Parker, and Cooper; and siblings, Marlene (Edwin) Newington and Kenneth (Carol) Wilder.

Carolyn was preceded in passing by her parents, the love of her life, Barry Kitzmiller, on Sept. 9, 2025, stepdaughter, Shelly Snyder, and brother, Robert Wilder.

Family and friends were invited to a memorial gathering on Friday, Feb. 20, at Adams Funeral Home, 502 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw.

Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at: adamspawpaw.com

Eva "Jane" Quigno

Eva "Jane" Quigno, 92, of Paw Paw, passed away peacefully on Feb. 15, 2026, at White Oaks Assisted Living, Lawton, surrounded by family. Jane was born on Sept. 29, 1933, to Ralph and Julia (Armstrong) Jarvis in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

She attended and graduated from New Market (Indiana) High School. Jane married Malcolm Scott in 1952, and was soon busy raising her two sons, Mike and Monte. Jane and Mal moved to Paw Paw, in 1964, as Mal found work in the area. Once Mike and Monte were in school, Jane worked for the Van Buren County District Court. She later worked for the 9th District Court in Portage as the court administrator, where she retired in 1994.

Later in life, Jane married Joe Quigno. They were married for 19 happy years before his passing. Jane loved and enjoyed the entire Quigno family - children and grandchildren.

Jane loved to be around people. She was a giving person, a friend and a helper. She was very independent and strong. Jane had a deep faith and love for our Lord and Savior, attending the First Christian Church in Paw Paw every Sunday morning. Jane volunteered at The Closet in Paw Paw and for Paw Paw Senior Services. She enjoyed knitting blankets, playing cards, gardening, and especially loved to see and spend time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Jane is survived by her son, Michael (Patricia) Scott of Battle Creek, MI; two brothers, Wilbert "Butch" Jarvis and Ray (Cindi) Jarvis; grandchildren, Christopher (Ellyn) Scott of Chaska, Minnesota and Jeffrey (Hope) Scott of Battle Creek; Sarah (Joel) Scott of Kalamazoo and Matthew (Kirsten) Scott of Williamsburg, Michigan. Her eight great-grandchildren, Charlotte, Everly, and Margaret; Emry, Cora, and Max; and Hudson and Henry.

Jane was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Joe Quigno; son, Lamont Scott; sisters, Harriet Anderson and Mary Jo Harmon, and a brother Hershel Jarvis.

Cremation has taken place. A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 11 a.m. at First Chirstian Church, 119 N. Niles St., Paw Paw, with the Rev. Ron Packer officiating. Jane will be laid to rest immediately following at Wildey Cemetery. Paw Paw. Following the committal service, everyone is invited to the American Legion Post 68, 115 N. Niles St., Paw Paw, for a time of food and fellowship.

The family would like to thank the staff at White Oaks Assisted Living and Centrica Care Navigators for their compassion and care. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the First Christian Church, 119 N. Niles St., Paw Paw, MI 49079, or Centrica Care Navigators Hospice, 7100 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at adamspawpaw.com

Road Commission implements seasonal weight restrictions

LAWRENCE - The Van Buren County Road Commission implemented full seasonal weight restrictions on Monday, Feb. 16, at 6 a.m. for all roadways under its jurisdiction, except for County All-Season roads.

"Seasonal Weight Restrictions are designed to preserve roads from damage caused by heavy vehicles during the freeze-thaw cycle," said AJ Brucks, Permit Officer and County Weighmaster. "As the ground thaws, moisture pushes upward toward the road surface, creating pressure that leads to potholes and other forms of deterioration. The heavier the vehicle, the higher the risk of damage."

Under state law, road agencies may enact restrictions on non-All-Season roads when conditions require it. During this period:

Axle-loading limits are reduced by 35 percent

Maximum travel speed is reduced to 35 MPH for vehicles over 10,000 pounds

The VBCRC does not issue any overweight/oversize moving permits when seasonal weight restrictions are in place

All roads under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission are restricted unless specifically designated as "All-Season."

For more information, visit the Road Commission's website at https://www.vbcrc.org/seasonalpermits.

To receive future email updates from the Road Commission regarding Seasonal Weight Restrictions, contact Brucks at: AJBrucks@vbcrc.org or by phone at (269) 674-8011, Ext. 252.

Cheesemaking class to be held at VBDL Lawrence Library

LAWRENCE – Van Buren District Library (VBDL) Lawrence Community Branch will offer a Cheesemaking Class, Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registration is required.

Participants will learn the art of making homemade goat's cheese and soft Chèvre-styled cheese. The session will include step-by-step participation on making both cheeses, forming, preserving and tasting after processing the goat's milk.

For more information or to register for the event, call (269) 674-3200.

Hours for the Lawrence Community Branch Library, 212 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, are Monday – Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Van Buren District Library is headquartered in Decatur with branches in Bangor, Bloomingdale, Covert, Decatur, Gobles, Lawrence and Mattawan.

Beacon Health System names new Beacon Allegan president

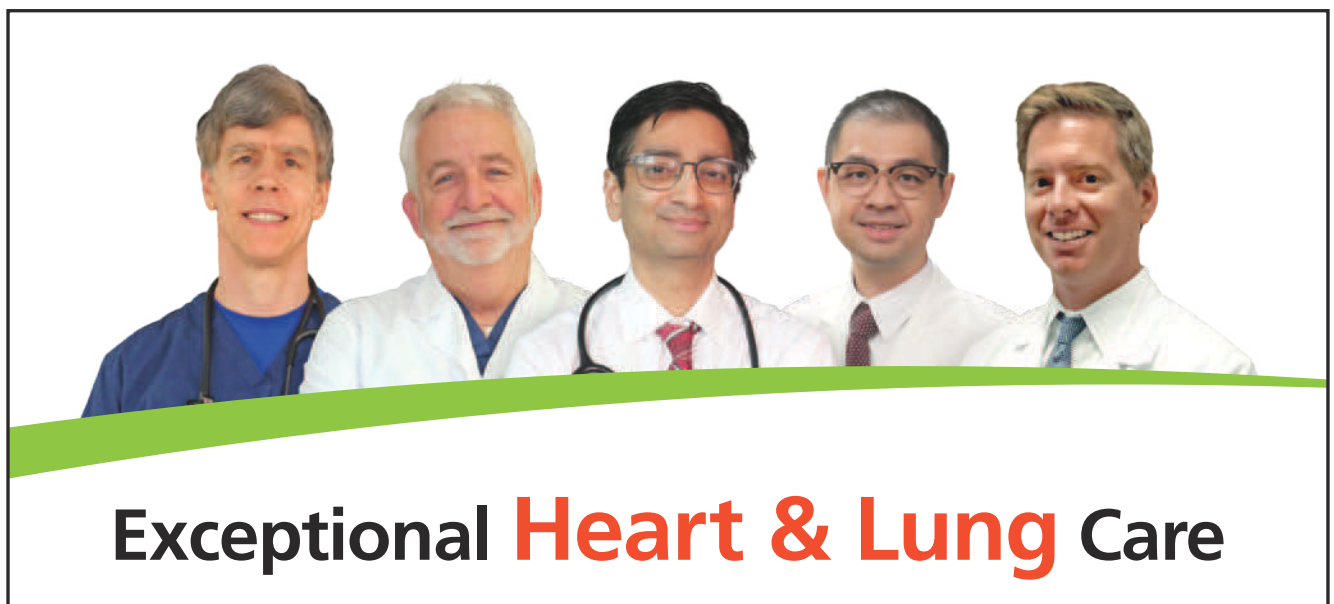
Beacon Health System announces that Gregory Piper has been named president of Beacon Allegan, a critical access hospital in southwest Michigan. Piper has served as interim president since November 2025.

Piper brings 25 years of healthcare leadership experience to the role, with expertise in operational excellence, strategic planning and organizational growth. Prior to his interim appointment, Piper served as Beacon's Vice President of Retail Operations, where he led critical operational functions across the health system. This included executive oversight of Beacon Granger Hospital from its opening in November 2019.

"I am honored to lead Beacon Allegan," Piper said. "Serving this community as interim president has deepened my commitment to our mission of delivering outstanding care in southwest Michigan." As a critical access hospital serving rural communities, Beacon Allegan plays a vital role in ensuring residents have access to quality care close to home.

"It's an honor to work alongside a dedicated team that embodies compassion, teamwork and resilience," he added. "I'm energized by how strongly our Beacon values align with our new board of volunteer community leaders. I look forward to continuing to build relationships with associates, providers and community partners as we strengthen healthcare access across the region."

Piper began his career at Beacon Health System in 2001 as Distribution Manager at Memorial Hospital and has progressed through leadership roles of increasing responsibility, including Director of Supply Chain Services, Executive Director of Supply Chain and most recently Vice President of Retail Operations. Piper received his bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a Master of Business Administration degree from Indiana University.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New day care opens on South Haven LMC campus

Amanda Garvin

Jennie Dyer

By James Windell

After more than a year of jumping through hoops, Scribbles Daycare Centers opened on February 23, 2026 on the campus of Lake Michigan College – South Haven.

Both the owner of Scribbles and Lake Michigan College couldn't be happier.

"It's wonderful for us as a college, for our staff and our students," says Jennifer Shoemaker, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications for Lake Michigan College. "We are thrilled that we got through all the hoops to get licensed, but we are also thrilled because as far as I know this is one of the few daycares in our community."

Childcare for the Lake Michigan College – South Haven was part of the campus design from the beginning. The campus opened in Fall 2003, and the building plan then explicitly included a childcare facility as one of its core components. However, hiring a director and getting licensed was not an easy process.

Amanda Garvin, who volunteered to help in the process, said that "After navigating a long and arduous process, the owner and I have successfully brought this project to life, and our community now has a new center available."

According to Jeremy Burleson, Associate Dean at Lake Michigan College – South Haven, the opening of Scribbles Daycare Center helps out the vision for the campus. "Our vision is to make sure that all of the things we're doing at the college are aligned," Burleson said. "Now that Scribbles is here, we can coordinate with Caring Connections, which is right across the hall. Whenh the adults in Caring Connections can work together with children in Scribbles, that will be monumental for both generations."

Scribbles' owner, Jennie Dyer, who has 27 years of experience in the childcare business, says that Scribbles has a staff of 13, including a director. "We will be open from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm five days a week and we will take children from infants to 12-year-olds. And we hope to have a summer program for older kids," Dyer said.

The hours are important, adds Burleson. "If you are a parent who has to go to work, you have the ability to drop your kids here and they will be taken to their school. School busses will pick up students and take them to school as part of their daily route."

Scribbles, located at 125 Veterans Blvd., South Haven, is available for children in the South Haven area and currently has room for 24 kids. Scribbles will soon be opening a daycare center at the Benton Harbor campus of Lake Michigan College and that center will be able to accommodate 60 children.

For more information about Scribbles Daycare Center or to enroll a child, visit the Scribbles website at scribbleschildcare.com

Johnson Tells HASH audience about this country's third reconstruction

Dr. Fred Johnson

By James Windell

Award-winning speaker and Hope College historian, Dr. Fred Johnson, captivated the attention of an audience at the Historical Association of South Haven on Thursday, February 18, 2026.

The HASH event took place at Hartman School, HASH's headquarters, 355 Hubbard Street with a near-capacity audience.

Asking relevant questions and offering key examples, Dr. Johnson opened his talk on "The Third Reconstruction" by noting the first reconstruction followed the Civil War. Using engaging slides, he began with Little Rock, 1957, focusing on the image of Elizabeth Eckford being harassed while trying to attend Central High – with Hazel Bryan's face becoming a global symbol of racism. He highlighted the severity of the moment: an 11th grader needing a U.S. Army escort to attend school. He then posed a guiding question: "How could the U.S. go from the Civil War's end to mid-20th-century scenes like Little Rock?"

That question, he inferred, could be asked following each of the reconstruction periods our country has seen. The first Reconstruction, he said, ended in 1877 and he highlighted the gains and backlash that came about as that first reconstruction ended, and he noted that with the end of reconstruction "slavery was even more entrenched."

Dr. Johnson went on to say that the Second Reconstruction era began with the 1950s' Civil Rights Movement which centered on voting, justice, housing, jobs, and equal rights. He stressed the contradiction of U.S. technological/world advances by 1955 while failing to resolve segregation and civil rights. He talked about the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 that ended school segregation under the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. However, that monumental Court ruling set off a broader domino effect against segregation in public life. He noted that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed by President Lyndon Johnson with Martin Luther King Jr. present. A year later, the Voting Rights Act was tied to the Selma campaign and Bloody Sunday on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. He read an extended MLK passage arguing that segregation was a political/economic strategy to divide poor Black and white workers and suppress labor power. He recounted King's assassination on April 4, 1968, stating that this was the end of the Second Reconstruction amid legislative gains but again more backlash.

He proposed that the Third Reconstruction began in 2008 with the election of Barack Obama. But he countered this by citing warning that came from Lerone Bennett, Jr. in 1989. Bennett wrote that reconstruction gains can always be reversed through backlash, defection by white liberals, economic interests, a conservative Supreme Court, and political shifts.

Dr. Johnson said as the Third Reconstruction era began on November 4, 2008 with Obama's election to be President, many saw his election as an apparent apex of national unity while acknowledging many feared it. He argued the current era shows familiar rollback pressures: Renewed debates around the 14th Amendment and citizenship; efforts to suppress voting; moves to end or restrict cultural/heritage celebrations (e.g., Black History Month); and attempts to restrict teaching about slavery.

Stated that the Third Reconstruction is "unfolding" and is being written day by day, Dr. Johnson invited discussion. One question a member of the audience asked was whether the current protests mattered. "Protests can build momentum," Dr. Johnson replied, "but they must translate into ballot box action, including in local elections."

Several participants emphasized humanity, love, self-examination, and raising new generations differently. In the end, Dr. Johnson reiterated his exhaustion with repeated cycles, but argued that the "good news" is that Americans keep returning to the work of trying to "get it right."

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VIEWPOINT

A Moment Worth the Wait — Why the U.S. Hockey Gold Feels So Good

Sometimes a sports moment turns into something bigger than a medal — it becomes a balm for a weary national psyche, a reminder of resilience, pride and unbridled joy. That's exactly what happened when Team USA's men's hockey team edged longtime rival Canada 2–1 in overtime to capture Olympic gold on February 22, 2026.

The game itself was the stuff of legend: an instantaneous heart-stopper that saw the U.S. fight toe-to-toe with a Canadian squad that had dominated international hockey for years. With the score tied 1-1 late, goaltender Connor Hellebuyck from Commerce Township MI stood tall with a jaw-dropping performance — stopping 40+ shots and repeatedly snuffing out Canada's attacks. Then, just 1:41 into the three-on-three overtime, Jack Hughes — bloodied but unbowed — ripped a shot past the Canadian netminder to end a 46-year Olympic gold medal drought.

So why does this moment feel so good beyond simply winning gold?

First — it was redemption. For decades American hockey was chasing the Canadians. Canada has long been seen as the dominant force on the ice, the standard bearer in a sport that often felt like it was theirs by right. To outlast them in overtime — in a gold medal game — in front of the world? That's validation in the purest sporting form.

Second — it was poetic history. The date wasn't just another day on the calendar. It was exactly 46 years to the day that the U.S. pulled off the iconic Miracle on Ice in 1980. This time, the victory didn't need to lean on nostalgia — but the symmetry gave a fresh generation its own cherished memory.

And third — it was grit personified. Sports fans love skill, but they revere heart. Hughes' winning goal — after taking a hard hit and literally losing teeth earlier in the game — encapsulated that old-fashioned virtue: willingness to sacrifice for team and country. That's a narrative that resonates deeply in a world where every win feels mediated by highlight reels and instant metrics.

Yet the significance goes even beyond the ice. This gold medal isn't just a triumph of speed and stickhandling. To many Americans, it feels like a moment of unity: a rallying point in a time when finding common ground can feel increasingly rare. The game reminded fans why we turn to sports in the first place — for shared breathlessness, collective celebration, and that electric moment when hope becomes reality.

My fiancé and I watched the entire game with bated breath. It was hard to watch a second period that saw Hellebuyck stop shot after shot, as the Canadians were clearly in command. But then, the U.S. team came out in the third period and played Team Canada to a draw. On to overtime, and then it happened.

Kudos to several of the players who hail from Michigan, where we all know youth hockey is almost as big as soccer. Four actually played for U of M and of course are now starring in the NHL.

In the end, this isn't just a hockey story. It's a feel-good chapter of national pride — one earned not with dominance, but with courage, resilience, and a golden goal that will echo for years to come. What a way to begin the nation's 250th birthday celebration.

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

Sheriff's Report-County Sheriff's Office deputy receives CPST certification

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Deputy Jeff Gilbert attended a four-day, 32-hour training session to get certified to be a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST). "Deputy Gilbert can now educate people throughout the United States on how to properly install child restraints i.e., car seats. Deputy Gilbert will now be another one of our go to deputies for teaching and providing hands-on opportunities with parents and caregivers. I would also like to note that with the new child restraint law change, citations for child restraint violations can be waived if they meet with a CPST and receive a brief training and inspection," said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Uniform Response took a larceny complaint by the west limits of the City of Hartford. It was found that individuals stole copper wire from service trucks that were sitting at a location in the early morning hours. Video was obtained, vehicles were identified, and suspects were developed. After the investigation is complete, warrants will be sought on the suspects.

Uniform Response took a larceny complaint in Geneva Township. "The victim had a long green neck dinosaur stolen from their property. "It's described as approximately 18 inches tall, 12 inches wide, two feet long, and is made from metal material. Not only is it green in color, but it also has white on the lower region of the neck and white claws. Anyone with any information is asked to call our office," said Sheriff Abbott.

Paw Paw's Chili Walk event was held Feb. 21, from noon to 4 p.m. "I was once again asked to judge the chilis entered into the event. This was a great event last year with a good turnout. "There was chili, desserts, drinks, entertainment, sales, and so much more," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response had a pursuit in Columbia Township in the early morning hours. The vehicle fled deputies after they tried to make a stop on it for a traffic violation. "The suspect ended up crashing at the county line and was put into custody after a several mile pursuit. He now faces charges for his actions," said Sheriff Abbott.

Dispatch received a call from a resident in Lawton about a domestic situation. "Due to the circumstances, a search warrant was sought. Deputies assisted Lawton Police Department on execution of the search warrant. An individual was lodged on numerous charges for the incident," said Sheriff Abbott.

"I attended the quarterly township supervisor meeting held this past week. It's always a good meeting with all the township supervisors who attend, as well as other stake holders such as county commissioners, county administrator or representative, prosecutor, Van Buren County Road Commission, Market One, some legislators or their representatives, and others in the community. A lot of information gets talked about and it's always a well-run meeting by Geneva Township Supervisor Nancy Whaley," said Sheriff Abbott.

Detective Chris Orr just attended and completed the United States Secret Service's National Computer Forensics Institute (NCFI) Digital Video Recorder (DVR) Forensics Course, which is an advanced training program focused on the recovery and analysis of digital video evidence from surveillance systems. "With more extensive training such as this, Detective Orr's expertise will directly benefit the office and community by ensuring that digital evidence is handled with the highest level of forensic standards," said Sheriff Abbott.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Paw Paw and surrounding communities

It is with deep regret that the Van Buren County CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty) Walk Board has decided to discontinue the Van Buren County CROP Walk for the foreseeable future.

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the Walk, as a longtime walker, or as a recent participant.

Several factors to discontinue were taken into consideration by the Board, including declining support from Church World Services, organizer of the CROP Walk, a decline in walkers and volunteers to help with the Walk, and finally, a decline in funds from the Walk.

As many of you are aware, 25 percent of all funds raised from the Van Buren County Walk stayed right here in Van Buren County, split amongst six different local food banks. However, due to the previous factors mentioned, the board decided that the Walk was no longer a viable fundraiser for those pantries.

We invite you to a free concert by international Christian recording artist and author, Jean Watson, who will give a benefit concert April 19, at 3 p.m. at Paw Paw United Methodist Church, 420 W. Michigan Ave. The concert will serve as celebration of the past 43 years of CROP Walks in Van Buren County. Those attending are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to the concert that will be collected and distributed to area food banks. A free will offering will also take place.

We feel that this will be a fitting tribute to the late Eleanor Miller, a longtime chairperson of Van Buren County CROP Walks, as well as many others who were passionate about Van Buren CROP Walk for many decades.

In closing, we wish to thank the Paw Paw Village Council for allowing the Walk for the past 43 years as well as the Paw Paw Village Police Department and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office for providing protection to the walkers along the route.

In Christ's Service,
Timothy Davis
Van Buren County CROP Walk Chairperson

Disparaging our nation abroad is nothing more than a clown show

Letter to the Editor.

Not since Obama's 2009 international apology tour have American turncoats so unashamedly used the world stage to denigrate their own nation. A handful of spoiled brats from the U.S. Olympic Team looking for their 15 minutes of fame criticized the nation they represent, simply for the adulation of the dying Woke movement. Hunter Hess, Amber Glenn and Chris Lillis certainly have a right to their opinions and that is never in question. With a great sense of entitlement they forget there were any number of athletes that could have been on the Olympic Team representing our nation. Olympians owe a debt to the nation that provides them the prospect of unlimited opportunity with their presence at the Olympic games. I'm not aware of any other 2026 Olympian team member that disparaged their own nation. Such behavior significantly diminishes the stature of the Olympics to nothing more than just one more athletic competition and at the end of the day athletes simply exist for our entertainment. Nothing more than dancing bears or rodeo clowns.

With the same sense of self-importance, several Democrats felt the need to take every opportunity to slander our nation and our current administration at the recent 62nd Munich Security Conference in Germany, including Virginia U.S. Senator Mark Warner, California Governor Gavin Newsom, New York U. S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Michigan's own Senator Elissa Slotkin and Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Other than exhibiting a united front of weakness and intellectual ineptitude they served no other worthwhile purpose at this event. They don't even recognize the irony in attending an international security conference while they all support defunding U.S. border security. Completely out of their element and speaking like ill-bred children during the adult hour, Cortez and our own corrupt Governor Whitmer made complete fools of themselves when they couldn't even answer the most rudimentary questions while participating in a U.S. Foreign Policy panel discussion. A panel that neither of them was conversant enough to participate and now the entire world is aware that the Democrats in attendance are not only incompetent but have no allegiance to the nation they represent.

Every successful event requires a memorable moment and for some reason that political zombie, Hillary Clinton, in all her bitter arrogance thought she had something constructive to offer the Munich attendees. Having been abandoned by the Democrat National Committee as well as George Soros and most other dark money liberal supporters she refuses to go gently into the night. Once the self-proclaimed feminist god, she felt compelled to lecture Europe of the 'gender revolution" and has redefined her support of biological women to now include anything that wishes to be identified as a woman. As if she wasn't acrimonious enough for having been left in the trash bin of history, she has chosen these losers to lead. It appears she has now found her home.

If the '26 Munich Security Conference has revealed anything it is how utterly incompetent and corrupt the new Democrat party has degenerated. If the Democrats that crashed Munich are representative of their party, then it appears our nation has reached a point where the Democrat party now lacks the competence, intellectual honesty or morality to ever be considered a legitimate American political party. They are now partnered with radical Islam, Communists, anarchists and one-world oligarchs that have all joined forces to destroy the last bastion of Christian liberty on our planet.

I realize that unfortunately there is an ever-increasing number of low information voters in our nation. What I can't fathom is how anyone of voting age can observe the behavior of the new Democrats and not see them for what they are. All the lies and misinformation regarding the SAVE Act doesn't even make sense. The left will rant about how voting is the cornerstone of democracy, and I can't argue with that. Then they turn around and remove security safeguards and exclaim that requiring a photo ID to participate in this sacred activity is racist. Here is when we know they are lying. Anytime the left can't justify their position they begin screaming claims of racism. Think about it for a moment, a government-issued photo ID is required to board a plane a bus or a train, rent most hotel rooms a rental car, lawn mower or chainsaw, purchase tobacco, alcohol, firearms or ammunition and even cash a check. Women have been managing marital name changes for many decades now and legal immigrants have been issued the proper required documentation. But according to the new Democrats, to require the proper government-issued ID to participate in one of our nation's most sacred rights is wrong because people of color and women are too stupid to figure it out.

Consider these recent findings: Pew Research Center revealed that 71% of Democrats support proof of citizenship when registering to vote the first time. Gallup Polls has this number at 67%. Needless to say, these numbers include both Hispanic, Black and female citizens. Yet after all this nonsense some people will continue to vote for Democrat candidates simply because they have always voted Democrat.

Throughout world history every great empire has ultimately collapsed. More often than not, from internal corruption and moral failure. Unless enough traditional Democrats begin voting with their brains and their moral compass America will simply be but another example of getting what we deserve.

In 1798 while addressing the Massachusetts Militia John Adams stated "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

John R. Young

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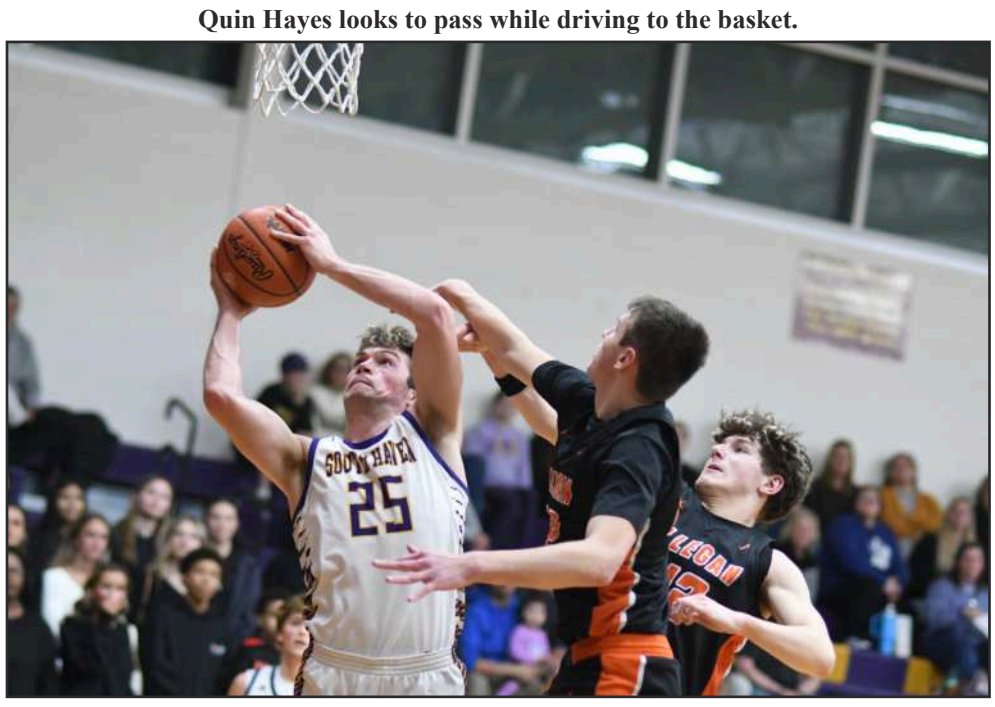
Rams finish regular season, 18-1, playoffs next

Quin Hayes looks to pass while driving to the basket.

Isaac Chalupa drives down the lane.



Isaac Chalupa muscles his way to the basket.

Grayson Knox celebrates scoring a basket (and being fouled).

Photos by Tom Renner

The South Haven Rams capped one of their most successful regular seasons in school history on Friday routing rival Allegan 78-36 on Seniors Night. The Rams are champions of the Lakeshore Division of the Southwestern Athletic Conference with a perfect 10-0 record, finishing the regular season overall at 18-1.

The team, coached by Ryne Hagerty, includes seven seniors: Grayson Knox, Levi DeLaRosa, Noah Weaver, Quin Hayes, Nick Taylor-Snow, Isaac Chalupa and Max Verseput.

Next is the MHSAA Division 2 District tournament, which Allegan is hosting this week.

South Haven wrestlers advance to state finals

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH — Brad Adamson. South Haven wrestling head coach said his program.

South Haven had two individuals qualify for the state tournament this past weekend.

On Saturday Feb. 21, Zayden Rowland finished in third place (144) at the Division 3 regional held at Belding High School after finishing runner up the previous week at Districts.

He is a senior and will be making his first trip to Ford Field for the State Finals.

His current record is 39-8 on the season with 30 of those wins coming by way of fall, and has 134 career wins to his name.

On Sunday Feb. 22, Kaelyn Adamson became the school's first ever girls regional champion by pinning her way to the 110-pound title at the Region 2 tournament held at Portage Northern High School.

She came in as the district champion from the week prior. This will be her second appearance at Ford Field, after placing eighth as a freshman last season.

Her current record is 40-9 on the season with 36 of those wins coming by way of fall.

Zayden Rowland (far left) finished in third place (144) at the Division 3 regional held at Belding High School after finishing runner up the previous week at Districts.

Kaelyn Adamson (far right) became the school's first ever girls regional champion by pinning her way to the 110-pound title at the Region 2 tournament

Paw Paw and Mattawan set for hoop districts

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw's boys basketball team will start its quest for a district title on Feb. 25 when it plays Otsego in a first-round game at Vicksburg.

Paw Paw ended the regular season with a 15-7 record.

Paw Paw had a three-game winning streak with wins of 67-48 over Plainwell, 67-46 over Niles and 72-48 over Three Rivers, but then lost to Berrien Springs 56-51.

Paw Paw came back with the win over Otsego.

The Paw Paw girls team is 5-15 and has games at Marcellus Howardsville Christian on Feb. 24 and at Sturgis on Feb. 26.

Paw Paw's girls district is at Plainwell Field house on March 2 against Vicksburg.

Mattawan boys are 10-11 after a 55-36 win over Stevensville Lakeshore on Feb. 23 to open district play. Mattawan also beat Richland Gull Lake on Feb. 20 to end the regular season.

The Mattawan girls are 7-11 and host the districts next week with a game on March 2 vs. Portage Northern.

Paw Paw wrestler going to state finals

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw 165-pound wrestler Kholby Armijo placed third last weekend in the regional meet to advance to the state finals March 6-7 to Ford Field in Detroit.

Armijo pinned Chase Kacher of Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central 1:27 to open the tournament. He was decisioned 10-8 by Braylon Faile 10-8. He pinned Cody Gernhard of Allandale in 3:20 and pinned Blake Bossenberger in 3:22 for the third-place spot.

Gunner Gale also wrestled in the regionals for Paw Paw and had a 1-2 day to end his season.

Paw Paw had one girl wrestler at the regionals with Sophia Fonseca who opened the day with a pin in 2:56 over Nataija Sikouabout of Holland.

But Fonseca lost her next two matches and her season ended.

She lost to Nellie Patsika of Berrien Springs on a pin in 3:34. In her next match, Fonseca lost to Jeorgia Mast of Constantine 9-3.

She wrestled at 110 pounds.

Fonseca the previous week was 4-0 at the district tournament for first place.

Mattawan girls win in overtime

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's girls basketball team won 49-48 over St. Joseph on Feb 18.

St. Joseph dominated early to build a 11-3 first quarter and 24-17 halftime lead. Jillian Conybeare led St. Joe with 12 first half points off of four made threes. Lainey Dorow added eight first half points for St. Joseph.

St. Joe took a 34-25 lead into the fourth quarter before Caitlin Ryan took over with 13 fourth quarter points including a three with 20 seconds left to make it 42-42.

In overtime Mattawan built a 49-44 lead before St. Joseph closed the lead to 2 and headed to the FT line with a chance to tie with one second left. After SJ made the 1st and missed the second Mattawan held on for the 49-48 OT win.

Mattawan improves to 7-10, having won five of their last six and heads to league leading Gull Lake Friday.

Caitlin Ryan had 26 points and Charlotte Douglass had 13 points.

Lainey Dorow had 23 points, Conybeare 12 points and Laurer Wright 11 points for St. Joseph.

Mattawan lost 38-33 to Richland Gull Lake in a three-overtime thriller on Feb. 20. Mattawan is 7-11 overall.

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Gobles advances five wrestlers to state finals

Gobles had five wrestlers that advanced to state finals March 6-7 at Ford Field

By John Raffel

GOBLES — Gobles had five wrestlers that advanced to state finals March 6-7 at Ford Field by virtue of their performances in the regionals last weekend.

Finn Carlin and Aiden Dukes are regional champions. Devin Doorlag and Brody Marshall earned silver medals, and Hunter Piper finished fourth.

The top four in each weight class advance to the finals.

Gobles Tigers advanced four wrestlers into the Regional Championship finals and finished with Finn Carlin (144) and Aiden Dukes (138) as champions. Piper fought his way through the back side of the Bracket.

"Finn and Aiden were dominant throughout the day," coach Erin Carlin said. "Both are strong wrestlers with their own styles. Both keep getting better as the year progresses, and they have strong mindsets. Brody and Devin have had a solid year and have worked hard to earn their ticket to Ford Field.

"Hunter Piper is making his first trip to The Show after working his way through the backside of the bracket. Brody, Devin, and Finn are all All-State Wrestlers, so they will have a lot to offer first-time qualifiers Aiden and Hunter in handling the mental and physical demands that accompany the competition."

Gobles cheerleader end their season

Gobles cheerleaders had a strong district performance. Bring it Back Blue #2 Front row Krislyn Conner, Kylee Newland, Senior Makenna Hunt and Bella Laughlin, Faith Biron. Back row Taylor Cooley, Ellie Hinson, Maggie Morand and Annika Begnoche.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES — Goble's competitive cheer team finished the season at Districts with their highest round 1 score of 202.4 and Round 2 Score of 172.3 clutching 4th place before round 3. "They had a good solid round 3 but came up a little over eight points short to move on to Regionals. I could not be more proud of this very young team and all they have accomplished this season. They all hold a special place in our heart. Thank you for all the support from the parents and families, administration, bus drivers, mat moving helpers, and all who helped make this season great. "We wish our Senior Makenna Hunt all the best in her future plans."

The objective in the three rounds is as follows:

Round 1: Cheerleaders show off their jumping skills and ability to choreograph motions.

Round 2: Cheerleaders perform a precision drill, tumbling, jumping, and flexibility.

Round 3: Cheerleaders perform stunts.

The top four teams moved on to regionals and Gobles was fifth. The top four regional teams move on to the state finals.

Bangor defeats Bloomingdale

By John Raffel
Correspondent

Bangor's girls basketball team improved its record to 9-11 overall and 5-11 in the Southwest Conference with a 42-21 win over Bloomingdale on Feb. 20.

Bloomingdale fell to 1-15 overall and 1-18 in the league.

Bangor lost to Centreville on Feb. 17 by a 49-17 verdict. Izzy Horvath scored six points for Bangor and had four rebounds and two assists.

Alex Wisnewski and Amiyah Corona had three steals apiece.

This week, Bangor was scheduled to play home with Comstock on Feb 24 and be at Lawrence on Feb. 26.

Bangor will play Bloomingdale at Watervliiet at 7 p.m. on March 2 in a district first-round game.

The season ended for Bangor's boys basketball team on Feb. 23 with a 41-39 to Lawton in the district 78 tournament.

Lawton is 9-13 and was set to play Gobles on Feb. 25 at Lawton in a semifinal district game.

Bangor's season ends at 10-13.

Ram bowlers advance to state finals

For the first time in school history, the South Haven High School boys bowling team is headed to the state championship meet.

The Rams finished second in the 11-team Division 3 Regional and will now advance to the state finals on Feb. 27-28 in Jackson.

In addition, Ryan Odell has qualified in the individual state competition after finishing second in the 60-bowler Regional. He averaged 191 pins over six games in the competition.

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THURSDAY Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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IGLESIA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO/ CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
30037 E Red Arrow Hwy.,
Pastors Maggie & Jay Salas
Domingo/Sunday: Adoración | Worship- 10 a.m.
Jueves/Thursday: Oracion/ Estudió Bíblico | Prayer/Bible Study- 7 p.m.
(269) 377-6514
(269) 993-6727

LAWRENCE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Corner of Exchange & James Street • 674-8381
Pastor Doug Tipken
SUNDAY Worship - 11 a.m.
lawrencemethodist-church.org for information of online videos

GOBLES

NORTHPOINT MINISTRIES OF GOBLES
04077 M40
269-628-9199
northpointgobles@gmail.com
Pastors: Gary Lounsberry & John Losen Jr.
Sunday: 11am - Morning Worship
Monday: 7 pm - REFRESH Bible Study
Wednesday: 7pm - Prayer Meeting

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ST JUDE' MISSION PARISH
13809 M-40
269-628-2219
Thursday – 10:00 AM
Sunday – 9:00 AM

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GOBLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
210 E. Exchange St., Gobles
(269) 628-2263
Pastor Sheila F. Baker
Sunday: 9:30 a.m. Worship
Children's Sunday School
Website: goblesumc.com
Facebook.com/goblesumc

MARCELLUS

ST. MARGARET MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
296 E. Dibble St.
Rev. John Tran.
668-3312
Sunday - 9:45AM

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HARMONY CHAPEL
88067 C.R. 652 (In the SW corner of Porter Twp.)
Rev. Ron Packer
269-548-7348
Please join us as we continue to Worship in the Country Since 1894 , SUNDAY Service - 12:30 p.m.
For mor information or directions call: Neal Ferguson: 269-624-6837 or Ann Nesbitt: 269-624-6781

DECATUR

DECATUR BIBLE CHURCH
80797 M-51, Decatur
(269) 423-5111
Pastor Steven Pace
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study & Prayer 5:00 p.m.
facebook.com/DecaturBibleChurch • http://www.decaturbible.org

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DECATUR NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH
319 ½ West Delaware Street
Pastor Ross Tarantino
SUNDAY
Worship Service-10:00 a.m.
TUESDAY
Bible Study-1:00 p.m.
269-423-8136
info@decaturnewhopecommunity.net

LAWTON

DAILY HARVEST MINISTRIES
117 S.Franklin Street
Pastor Jack Shanley
SUNDAY Worship - 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study - 6 p.m.

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IGLESIA PENTECOSTES
Eel Movimiento misionero Mundial, Inc.
Bilingual
117 S. Franklin Street
Pastors Arturo & Lourdez Hernandez
(616) 656-0137
SERVICES
Domingo - 9:30 a.m.
Martes y Jueves - 7:30 p.m.
Local: (269) 655-8071

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LAWTON EVANGELICAL CHURCH
425 S. Nursery Street, Lawton • 624-1524
Call if you need help in some way
www.lawtonevan.com
SUNDAY Worship Services - 10 a.m.
We offer Nursery and Children's Church

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NEW COMMUNITY CHURCH
502 N. Main Street, Lawton, MI 49065
Pastor Adam Potgiesser
Sunday Worship 10am
www.nc2online.com • facebook.com/nc2online
(269) 299-2003

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ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
624-1050
Pastor Ashlei Horn
SUNDAY Worship - 10:00 a.m.
www.stpoulsumclawton.com or on Facebook www.Facebook.com/Lawton-St-Pauls-UMC

MATTAWAN

CALVARY COMMUNITY CHURCH
7829 S. 5th St
Pastor Gregory VanHeukelom
375-6240
www.calvaryreformed.org
Website: https://www.calvary-community.church/
Worship still 10 am Sunday with live Facebook
Jody's Closet, a free clothing ministry is open Mon/Tue 10am-12 and Thur 6-7:30pm And the 1st Saturday of the month 8:30-10am.

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FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
56070 Murray Street
Pastor Chuck Rawsthorne
SUNDAY
School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Service - 10:30 a.m.
(In person and on Facebook)

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MATTAWAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
23680 Front Ave.
668-3263
www.mattawancc.com
mattawancommunitychurch@gmail.com
Pastor Eric Baird
Sundays at 10:25 a.m

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ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC CHURCH
23830 Front Ave.
Rev. John Tran
668-3312
www.stjbparish.com
Sunday Mass times to 8:00 AM & 11:30 AM Saturday Vigil 4:00PM

DIRECTORY OF CHURCH SERVICES IS PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

HIEMSTRA OPTICAL CO.
Michael Houser & staff
133 E. Michigan Avenue
Paw Paw • **657-4511**

DE SMIA
Insurance Agency, INC.
130 N. Main Street
Lawton • **624-4411**

BRONSON LakeView Hospital
408 Hazen Street
Paw Paw • **657-3141**

CAMPBELL MURCH CEMETERY MEMORIALS, INC.
56556 Main Street
Mattawan • **668-3350**

THE CLOTHES BASKET
314 Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw • **657-6441**

ST JULIAN winery • distillery
Michigan's Oldest & Largest Winery
716 S. Kalamazoo Street
Paw Paw • **657-5568**

Adams FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATION SERVICES
ADAMS FUNERAL HOME
Serving the Community Since 1948
504 W. Michigan Avenue
Paw Paw • **657-6347**

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

State of Michigan
Probate Court Van Buren County
Notice To Creditors
Decedent's Estate
Case No. 2026-1012-DE
Judge Susan Metzger
Estate of Carol Ann Maidment
Date of Birth: September 16,1954
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Carol Ann Maidment, died October 6,2025.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Robert Maidment, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St # 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
2/17/2026
Attorney:
David C. Brunell #P 41265
39111 Six Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48152
734-466-9277
Personal Representative:
Robert Maidment
1718 Chestnut Street
Mishawaka, IN 46545
269-744-2321

State of Michigan
Probate Court Van Buren County
Notice To Creditors
Decedent's Estate
Case No. 2026-1003-DE
Judge Susan Metzger
Estate of Ruthanne Theresa Aemisegger
Date of Birth: July 20,1958
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Ruthanne Theresa Aemisegger, died October 11, 2025.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Mitchell Detlefsen, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw St # 220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
2/26/2026
Attorney:
Thav, Ryke and Langan, P.L.L.C
Thomas J. Langan #P81339
24725 West 12 Mile Road, Suite 110
Southfield, MI 48034
248-945-1111
Personal Representative:
Mitchell Detlefsen
45759 Paw Paw Road
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-292-0731

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Nancy E. Butterfield Trust
dated June 12, 2017
In Re: Nancy E. Butterfield
Date of birth: March 16, 1938
NOTICE TO ALL CREDITORS:
The decedent Nancy E. Butterfield, of 706 Kentucky Avenue, South Haven, Michigan, died February 6, 2026.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against Nancy E. Butterfield or her Trust, will be forever barred unless presented in writing to Carrie B. Beukelman, as Trustee of the Nancy E. Butterfield Trust dated June 12, 20177, of 1179 N. M-140, Watervliet, Michigan 49098, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. No probate proceedings will be initiated.
February 18, 2026
Anna Urick Duggins (P57402)
Carrie B. Beukelman, Trustee
Parmenter Law 1179 N. M-140
Attorney at Law Watervliet, MI
49098 P.O. Box 786
Muskegon, MI 49443
Phone: (231) 722-1621

State of Michigan
36th Judicial Circuit
Family Division Van Buren County
Publication of Hearing
Case No. 25020248na
TO: Taylor Lesman
IN THE MATTER OF: Aries Lesman-Taylor
A hearing regarding Family Court Bench Trial will be conducted by the court on March 26th, 2026 at 9:30 am in Courtroom 2, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079 before Judge Jeffrey Dufon.
You have the right to an attorney and the right to a trial by judge or jury.
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that Taylor Lesman personally appear before the court at the time and place stated above.
This hearing may result in Court Jurisdiction over your child.

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: John Samuel-James Deerwester; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 2/26/2026; Atty File #: 528314F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): John Samuel-James Deerwester, a single person
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): NewRez LLC D/B/A Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
Date of Mortgage: May 20, 2021
Date of Mortgage Recording: May 25, 2021
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,650.25
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pine Grove, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 13, Barber's LakeView Heights, according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 5, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 31337 Baseline Rd, Gobles, MI 49055-9082
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1585565
(02-26)(03-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Margaret Brown; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/26/2026; Atty File #: 528126F01; Insurer: FNMA
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 2, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Margaret Amanda Brown, an unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Onslow Bay Financial LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 14, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 5, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $217,767.89
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Porter, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The West 14 acres of the Southwest fractional 1/4 of the Southwest fractional 1/4 of Section 7, Town 4 South, Range 13 West, except the South 7 acres thereof.
Together with and subject to a non-exclusive easement for pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress over the following described parcel located in Decatur Township, County of Van Buren, commencing at the Southeast corner of Section 12, Town 4 South, Range 14 West, according to the government survey thereof; thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West 1317.32 feet along the East line of the Southeast 1/4 of said Section 12 to the North line of the South 1/2 of said Southeast 1/4; thence North 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds West 837.58 feet along said North line to the centerline of County Road 669; thence North 30 degrees 05 minutes 17 seconds East 18.81 feet along said centerline to the place of beginning; thence continuing North 30 degrees 05 minutes 17 seconds East 18.81 feet along said centerline; thence South 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds East 245.88 feet parallel with and 33.0 feet North of said North line; thence South 01 degree 23 minutes 37 seconds West 16.50 feet; thence North 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds West 254.94 feet parallel with said North line to the place of beginning. Also together with and subject to a 16.5 foot wide non-exclusive easement for vehicular and pedestrian ingress and egress across real property located in Decatur Township, Van Buren County, Michigan, described as the North 16.5 feet of that certain property described as: Commencing at the Southeast corner of Section 12, Town 4 South, Range 14 West; thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West along the East section line 608.40 feet (also recorded as North 00 degrees 03 minutes 02 seconds West 608.25 feet); thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West (also recorded as North 00 degrees 03 minutes 02 seconds West) along the East section line 441.27 feet to the beginning; thence North 88 degrees 37 minutes 06 seconds West 619.66 feet; thence North 00 degrees 02 minutes 13 seconds West (also recorded as North 00 degrees 00 minutes 12 seconds West) 284.30 feet to a line 16.5 feet North of and parallel with the North line of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4 of section; thence South 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds East (also recorded as South 88 degrees 39 minutes 00 seconds East) 619.49 feet to the East section line; thence South 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds East (also recorded as South 00 degrees 02 minutes 07 seconds East) along the East section line 284.64 feet to beginning
Common street address (if any): 34297 County Road 669, Lawton, MI 49065-9425
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1585341
(02-26)(03-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Jason Garcia; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/19/2026; Atty File #: 528265F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Jason Garcia, married man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): AMERIHOME MORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 14, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 1, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $287,159.24
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pine Grove, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 1, Woodland Estates, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Liber 8 of Plats, page 157, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 33610 Pinedale Ln, Gobles, MI 49055-8226
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 19, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145, Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1584882
(02-19)(03-12)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Douglas A Clark; Atty: SOTTILE and BARILE PLLC - SOTTILE and BARILE PLLC; 1st Pub: 2/12/2026; Atty File #: MF2512008; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE DUTY.
ATTN PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Under the power of sale contained herein in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or a cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE SALE – Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Douglas A. Clark and Brenda M. Clark, a married couple, original mortgagors, to Citifinancial, Inc., dated March 18, 2009, and recorded March 31, 2009 in Liber 1516, Page 577, in VAN BUREN County records, Michigan, and assigned to CitiFinancial Servicing LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on June 30, 2017 in Liber 1654, Page 815, and assigned to Bayview Loan Servicing, LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on June 30, 2017 in Liber 1654, Page 816, and assigned to Nationstar Mortgage LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on September 20, 2022 in Liber 1743, Page 666 and assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, as Trustee of the LB-TIKI Series V Trust by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on May 8, 2023 in Liber1752, Page 618 and assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, as Trustee of the LB-Ranch Series V Trust by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on May 8, 2023 in Liber 1752, Page 619, and, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Ninety Two Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Nine and 74/100 dollars ($92,959.74). Said premises are situated in the City of DOWAGIAC, County of VAN BUREN, and State of Michigan, and particularly described as: Lot 3, Lakeland Terrace according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 35, Van Buren County Records Property Address:66901 M 152, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047 Parcel No.: 80-12-120-002-00 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Dated: February 12, 2026 For more information, please call: (513) 444-4100 Sottile and Barile PLLC Attorneys for Plaintiff 394 Wards Corner Boulevard, Suite 180 Loveland, OH 45140 File MF2512008 - Moore, Brenda - JR
(02-14)(03-07)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Mervin E Mortimore Jr; Atty: BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS - BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 25-34417; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on March 12, 2026. The amount due on the Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a Mortgage made by Mervin E. Mortimore, Jr. Marr and Lori Mortimore Marr to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated September 9, 2003 and recorded September 25, 2003 in Liber 1396 at Page 631, Van Buren County, Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, National Association by assignment and/or merger. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of $66,383.42. Said premises are located in Van Buren County, Michigan and are described as: 04048925/74201 28th Street, Lawton, MI, 49065 Property located in the Township of Porter, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan Parcel # 80-16-003-011-00 THE NORTH 17 3/8 ACRES OF THE WEST 136 ACRES OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 3, TOWN 4 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT SURVEY THEREOF. INSURANCE Said property is commonly known as 74201 28TH ST, Lawton, MI 49065. The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Please be advised that any third party purchaser is responsible for preparing and recording the Sheriff's Deed. If this is a residential Mortgage, the following shall apply: ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF YOU: ARE A DEBTOR IN AN ACTIVE BANKRUPTCY CASE; ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A BANKRUPTCY STAY; OR, HAVE RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN BANKRUPTCY AND YOU HAVE NOT REAFFIRMED THE DEBT, THIS NOTICE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY. Dated: January 29, 2026 Attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage: Thomas E. McDonald (P39312) Brock & Scott, PLLC 5431 Oleander Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 PHONE: (844) 856-6646 File No. 25-34417
(02-05)(02-26)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Kevin R. Brown; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 26-000823; Insurer: GNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on MARCH 5, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Kevin R. Brown, a married man, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Mortgage 1 Incorporated, Mortgagee, dated May 25, 2022 and recorded May 27, 2022 in Liber 1738, Page 661 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Siwell Inc. DBA Capital Mortgage Services of Texas, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Ninety-Eight Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Six and 69/100 Dollars ($198,166.69).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on MARCH 5, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Almena, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 9, FILIPUNAS PLAT, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 100, Van Buren County Records.
47041 County Road 653, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: February 5, 2026
File No. 26-000823
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(02-05)(02-26)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Phyllicia Eubanks; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 512288F04; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Phyllicia J. Eubanks, a single woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR RCF 2 EBO TRUST
Date of Mortgage: February 13, 2020
Date of Mortgage Recording: February 21, 2020
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $251,108.77
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Lawton, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: LOT 9, NORTH POINT WOODS, AS RECORDED IN LIBER 8 OF PLATS, PAGE 167, VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS.
Common street address (if any): 1015 Point Way, Lawton, MI 49065-8797
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 5, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145, Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1583929
(02-05)(02-26)

WAVERLY TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 4-1-26 THROUGH 03-31-27

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Budget Hearing and Adoption of the Budget for the fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 has been scheduled for **March 3, 2026 at 12:30 P.M.** at the Waverly Township Hall, 42114 M-43 Highway, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Starr Houston
Waverly Township Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING ALMENA TOWNSHIP FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Almena Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed township budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year at the Almena Township Hall, located at 27625 CR 375, Paw Paw MI 49079 on Monday, March 9, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection at the Almena Township Hall.

The Almena Township Board will provide the necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon request to the Almena Township Board by writing or calling the Almena Township Hall located at 27625 CR 375, Paw Paw MI 49079 or (269) 668-6910 M-W-Th 9 a.m. to 4 p.m

Sandra Rickli
Clerk, Almena Township

Columbia Township
NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW HEARINGS

The Board of Review will be meeting in March to review the Assessment Roll and hear appeals. All meetings will be held at the Columbia Township Hall, 53033 CR 390, Grand Junction, Michigan 49056. The organizational meeting will be held on March 2nd, 2026 at 7:00 am. No appeals will be heard at the organizational meeting. *The appeal hearings will be held on March 9th from 3:00 Đm to 9:00 pm and March 10th. from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm* APPEALS ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.
Please contact the Columbia Township Assessor, Danielle Golembiewski by phone 269-225-9006 or by email at ***Assessor@ColumbiaTwp.com*** to make an appointment.
If the times available are not convenient, you may appeal by letter. Send letters and supporting documentation to Columbia Township, PO Box 323, Grand Junction, MI 49056. All letter appeals must be received by 2:00 p.m. 3-10-2026.

Monday March 9th 3:00pm to 9:00pm
Wednesday March 10th 9:00am to 3:00pm

Assessments have been adjusted to result in anticipated multipliers of 1.0000 for all classes. With "Proposal A" in effect, the Taxable Values, excluding new construction and ownership transfers, are capped at the inflation rate of 2.7% for the 2026 tax year. Taxes are based on the Taxable Value. Also, note that if you should have a Principal Residence Exemption on your property and this is not noted on your notice, you should contact the Assessor.

2026 Starting Ratios are as follows:		Factors:	
Ag:	49.31	Ag:	1.0139
Com:	46.18	Com:	1.0827
Ind:	49.21	Ind:	1.0160
Res:	46.68	Res:	1.0711
Personal:	50.00	Personal:	1.0000

Columbia Township Assessor, Danielle Golembiewski

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• CLASSIFIEDS •

• WANTED •

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FIELD PLUMBING & HEATING, INC. Services all brands of heating & cooling equipment in your home or business. 24/7 service for over 50 years, 269-674-3839.

BUYING JUNK CARS, trucks, scrap metal and farm machinery. Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, 1525 King Highway, Kalamazoo. 269-381-1315.

PRO HANDYMAN SERVICE
SOUTH HAVEN AREA Call 269-903-6397.

PERRY'S PERFECT PITCH PIANO TUNING
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(269) 998-6977

PUBLIC NOTICE
WAVERLY TOWNSHIP
2026 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW

The Waverly Township March Board of Review for 2026 will be held at the Waverly Township Hall, 42114 M-43 Hwy, on the following dates:

March 3rd, 2026 (8:00am – 9:00am) = **Organizational Meeting – No Appeals**
March 9th, 2026 (10:00am – 1:00pm & 2:00pm - 5:00pm) = **Appeal Hearing***
March 10th, 2026 (2:00pm – 5:00pm & 6:00pm – 9:00 pm) = **Appeal Hearing***
*By Board resolution, residents are able to protest by letter, provided protest letter is received prior to March 10TH, 2026.
The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2026 are as follows:

Class	Ratio	Factor
*Agricultural	49.49%	1.01031
*Residential	47.68%	1.04866
*Personal Property	50.00%	1.00000
*Industrial	50.00%	1.00000
*Commercial	41.90%	1.19332

American With Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The Township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon (5) days notice.
Contact: (Starr Houston – 269-657-6847)
Anne Richmond, Assessor — Starr Houston, Clerk

NOTICE OF VILLAGE OF DECATUR PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

TO:THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE VILLAGE OF DECATUR, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE **that a Public Hearing/ Regular Planning Commission Meeting will be held by the Planning Commission on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Decatur Village Hall located at 114 North Phelps Street within the Village.**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE **that the item(s) to be considered at this Public Hearing include, in brief, the following:**
1. Request rezoning from R-1 to B-2 amending the Village of Decatur Zoning Map to rezone parcels 80-43-040-649-11 & 80-43-040-649-10 to B-2 as supported by the Village of Decatur Master Plan

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that written comments may also be submitted in advance of the meeting and delivered to Village Hall, or may be e-mailed to Manager Christopher Tapper at ctapper@decaturmi.us

Comments and questions can be directed at:
Village of Decatur: Megan Duncan, Village Clerk
114 N. Phelps Street
Decatur, MI 49045
(269) 423-6114

The Village of Decatur will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at this meeting upon four (4) days' notice to the Village Clerk.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
PAW PAW TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

The Paw Paw Township Planning Commission will hold public hearings regarding the following requests. The public is invited to comment on the matter.
Application:
- Requests:
  - A rezoning from Agricultural Farmland Protection (AGR) to Waterfront Area (WFR) with voluntary conditions and limitations (to only allow non-profit recreation, health, educational, and social facilities).
  - An amendment to Section 42-5.05 E (1) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the Planning Commission to waive the requirement of paved road access for special land uses in the WFR zoning district and to reduce the required setback for buildings 1,000 square feet or less from 100 feet to the requirement for permitted uses in the WFR zoning district (50 front, 15 side, and 50 rear).
- Project Address: 40730 62nd Avenue, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Project Parcel Number: 80-14-021-027-01
- Applicant: Excelling Leaders, Attn: Kevin Prins

Meeting Information:
- Location: Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St., Paw Paw, MI, 49079
- Date: March 17, 2026
- Time: 6:00 PM
- Hearing and project information: call 269-657-4340 or email clerk@pawpawtownship.org

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Planning Commission Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PAW PAW TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Paw Paw Township Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing regarding the following request. The public is invited to comment on the matter.

Application:
- Request: Variance for a new home to be constructed with a rear setback of 24 feet (requirement is 50 feet). The variance request relates to Chapter 42, Article 6, Attachment 3 of the Paw Paw Township Zoning Ordinance (dimensional requirements).
- Zoning District: Waterfront Area (WFR)
- Project Address: Palmer Drive, Paw Paw, MI 49079 (no address number, but north of 69696 Palmer Drive)
- Project Parcel Number: 80-14-430-069-00
- Applicant: Palmer Drive LLC - LCH

Meeting Information:
- Location: Paw Paw Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St., Paw Paw, MI, 49079
- Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026
- Time: 7:00 PM
- Hearing and project information: call 269-657-4340 or email clerk@pawpawtownship.org

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Zoning Board of Appeals Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

TOWNSHIP OF ANTWERP
2026 NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review will meet at the Township Hall, 24821 Front Ave., Mattawan, Michigan 49071, to examine and review the 2026 assessment roll. The board will convene on the following dates for the hearing of appeals of assessments or taxable values, poverty exemptions, parcel classification appeals and/or current year qualified agricultural denials:

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 8:30 am Organizational Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, Noon to 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm

And on such additional days as required to hear all persons who have given notice of the desire to be heard until assessment rolls have been revised, corrected, and approved.

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. Contact the Assessor at 269-655-1144 or by email at ***BEN.APGLLC@GMAIL.COM*** for further information. Letter appeals will be accepted and must be received no later than 5:00 pm March 11, 2026. Address listed below.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for 2026 are as follows:

Agricultural	49.25%	1.0152
Commercial	45.61%	1.0963
Industrial	48.43%	1.0324
Residential	47.58%	1.0509
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Tentative equalization factor of 1.000 for all classes is expected after completion of Board of Review.

Daniel J. Ruzick, Supervisor Antwerp Township
Ben Brousseau, Assessor Antwerp Township

Antwerp Township Board Meetings are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven-(7) days notice to Antwerp Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Antwerp Township by writing or calling.

Chantel Reyna
Antwerp Township Clerk
24821 Front Ave., Mattawan, MI 49071
269.668.2615 x200

TOWNSHIP OF PAW PAW
2026 NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review will meet at the Township Hall, 114 N. Gremps St. Paw Paw, MI 49079, to examine and review the 2026 Assessment Roll. The board will convene on the following dates for the hearing of appeals of assessments or taxable values, poverty exemptions, parcel classification appeals and/or current year qualified agricultural denials:

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 10:00 am Organizational Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm Monday, March 16, 2026, Noon to 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm

and on such additional days as required to hear all persons who have given notice of the desire to be heard until assessment rolls have been revised, corrected, and approved.

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. Contact the Assessor at 269-655-1144 or by email at ***BEN.APGLLC@GMAIL.COM*** for further information. Letter appeals will be accepted and must be received no later than 5:00 pm March 16, 2026. Address listed below.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for 2026 are as follows:

Agricultural	46.49%	1.0755
Commercial	45.76%	1.0927
Industrial	49.52%	1.0097
Residential	48.07%	1.0401
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Tentative equalization factor of 1.0000 for all classes is expected after completion of Board of Review.

Tom Palenick, Supervisor Paw Paw Township
Ben Brousseau, Assessor Paw Paw Township

Paw Paw Township Board Meetings are open to all without regard to race, national origin, sex, or disability.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to Paw Paw Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Paw Paw Township by writing or calling.

Paw Paw Township Clerk
114 N. Gremps St.
Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-4340

Planning for the Detroit River and St Clair River walleye

A cold wind was swirling, a mixture of light snow and rain was in the air, and the river surface was frothy. We were tucked behind an island making a 400-yard drift, and the fish were cooperating.

The mighty Detroit River rarely disappoints. Unless the entire river is mud, and that happens on occasion, fishable water with fish is present somewhere. The first key is to continue moving from spot to spot.

We rarely fish unless we see fish on the graph. And we rarely stay more than, say, fifteen minutes without hooking up on a walleye. Pure mud water, where visibility is limited to a few inches, is no good. Crystal clear water is also tougher. Water with some color to it will produce the best. Therefore, a Canadian license should be purchased.

Our tackle box is fairly sparse. We are not hung up on any particular jig head design. We do like the shiner head style from the Do-it-Mold Company. This jig head, along with a pill-style head, appears to have a longer belly than a traditional round ball head.

Either way, they all work. We use a one-ounce jig head the most. On windy days or when confronting depths greater than, say, 45 feet, we might opt for the 1.5-ounce head. Many guides have switched to the heavier heads because it's easier for their clients to feel the bottom.

Most guides use the unpainted heads. We paint ours with the glow chartreuse or the glow yellow. Jig head color means very little to me.

The other jig head that we use a lot, nearly half of the time, would be the Whistler jig heads. This head comes with a propeller blade and is downright deadly. However, they discontinued the one-ounce model a few years back. No worries, buy some one-inch propeller blades, a few beads, and a very small section of plastic tubing. For about a quarter, you can make your own. And I doubt that 1 angler out of 500 has ever used this bait on the river. We are old, and we learned this trick several years ago.

We use three different colors of plastic. Something along the lines of the Pimp Daddy, the dark purple and a translucent blue. Something along the lines of the old black ice and blue ice. One of these three colors will always be produced. Most of our plastics come from Charlie Brewer.

In the last two years, hair jigs have become a huge part of my arsenal. I still use the same size jig heads, but the deer hair and/or marabou body is unlike anything another angler would be using. You barely need to lift the jig. The current gets the hair and marabou just pulsating. Make your own or check out Fly Fishing University.

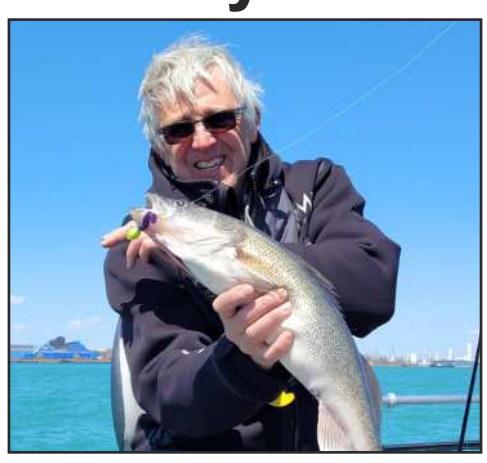
A simple way to make your own would be to use a piece of plastic worm and a piece of marabou strand. A three-inch needle is needed, and it takes 1 minute to make. Check out how to make a Lindy Fuzzy Grub.

In any given season, 80-90% of our fish come on a stinger hook. The stinger hook needs to hang at least a half-inch behind your plastic tail or hair. A walleye will suck in the plastic tail or the hair, and often shortens the jig head hook. The stinger will catch the fish.

A dead rod with a streamer is a neat way to fish two rods. I do this only when the conditions are perfect. I need to run the trolling motor and a rod with a jig. The dead rod should have a sinker of at least 1.5 ounces, and two ounces might be better. You do not want it tangling with your jigging rod. streamers

Bottom bouncers and three-way rigs come into play as the water warms. Some anglers use a crawler harness, but I would go with a slow-death rig and a Smyle Blade. Use just enough crawler with only 1 inch of hanging.

We bleed all of our fish just before heading back to the dock. When we fillet the fish, we also zip each fillet, removing the mud line and the pin bones. Both are very simple techniques that take only a minute. Stop in at Bob's Gun and Tackle Shop for your early-season fishing products.



Author with a Detroit river walleye caught on a charie brwer tail

Jack Payne

Payne is a member of OWAA (outdoor writers association of America). He is an avid outdoorsperson who enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking and cooking. This column will hopefully enhance your outdoor experiences. "While I may have some knowledge, I am very fortunate that I do know many true experts that share their knowledge with me," said Payne. "Together, hopefully we all can learn and experience more fun in the great outdoors." Payne resides in southwest Michigan. His column will appear weekly in the Courier Leader/Flashes.

BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP 2026 NOTICE BOARD OF REVIEW

THE BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW FOR 2026 WILL BE HELD AT THE BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP HALL, 109 E. KALAMAZOO ST., BLOOMINGDALE, MI 49026 ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

MARCH, 3 2026 (3:30 pm)
ORGANIZATION MEETING
NO APPEALS NO APPEALS
MARCH 11, 2026 (9 am to 3 pm)
APPEAL HEARING
MARCH 13, 2026 (3pm to 9 pm)
APPEAL HEARING **

**ALL APPEALS WILL BE HEARD BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. PLEASE CALL 269-521-3800 EXT 4 TO SCHEDULE AN Appointment. BY BOARD RESOLUTION, RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO PROTEST BY LETTER, PROVIDED PROTEST LETTER IS RECEIVED PRIOR TO MARCH 11th 2026 BY 5:00 PM.

TENTATIVE RATIOS AND ESTIMATED MULTIPLIERS FOR 2026 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

CLASS	RATIO	FACTOR
*Agricultural	43.11%	1.15982
*Residential	44.18%	1.13173
*Personal	50.00%	1.0000
*Commercial	45.68%	1.09457
*Industrial	49.03%	1.01978

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) NOTICE:

The township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon (5) days' notice. Contact: Michael Richmond at 269-521-3800 ext. 4.

MICHAEL RICHMOND - ASSESSOR

GOBLES CITY 2026 NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review will meet at the City Hall, 105 E. Main St., Gobles, Michigan 49055, to examine and review the 2026 assessment roll. The board will convene on the following dates for the hearing of appeals of assessments or taxable values, poverty exemptions, parcel classification appeals and/or current year qualified agricultural denials:

- Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 3:00 pm Organizational Meeting
- Monday, March 9, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Monday, March 16, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

And on such additional days as required to hear all persons who have given notice of the desire to be heard until assessment rolls have been revised, corrected, and approved.

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. Contact the Assessor at 269-655-1144 or by email at ben.apgllc@gmail.com for further information. Letter appeals will be accepted and must be received no later than 5:00 pm March 16, 2026. Address listed below.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for 2026 are as follows:

Agricultural	48.66%	1.0275
Commercial	48.10%	1.0395
Industrial	50.00%	1.0000
Residential	46.48%	1.0757
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Tentative equalization factor of 1.0000 for all classes is expected after completion of Board of Review.
Ben Brousseau, Assessor Gobles City

Gobles City Board Meetings are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The City will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven-(7) days' notice to Gobles City. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Gobles City by writing or calling.

Paula Sipes
Gobles City Clerk
105 E. Main St
P.O. Box 38
Gobles, MI 49055

NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR TIERED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Date of Publication: Thursday, February 26
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
735 East Michigan Avenue
Lansing, MI 48912
517-335-2524

On or after *March 6* **the** Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) **will submit a request to the** *HUD Office of Community Planning and Development* **for the release of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds under** Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following project:

Tier 1 Broad Review Project/Program Title: Five Year Environmental Review for MSHDA CDBG-Funded Homeowner Rehabilitation
Purpose: MSHDA will provide units of local government with funds to provide homeowners, within their jurisdictions, earning at or below 80% of the area median income with assistance for essential home repairs.
Location: The program will service single family homes within Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Branch Counties.
Project/Program Description: The CDBG Homeowner Rehabilitation Program aims to improve quality of life for local residents by funding essential home repairs for properties occupied by households earning at or below 80% of the area median income. All repairs must: be eligible under CDBG guidelines as defined in the MSHDA CDBG Policy Manual; comply with local building codes; and meet the MSHDA Housing Rehabilitation Standards.

Tier 2 site specific reviews will be completed for those laws and authorities not addressed in the Tier 1 broad review for each address under this program when addresses become known.
Level of Environmental Review Citation: *24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(3)(i)*

Tier 2 Site Specific Review: The site specific reviews will cover the following laws and authorities not addressed in the Tier 1 broad review: Flood Insurance [Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 [42 USC 4001-4128 and 42 USC 5154a]]; Coastal Zone Management Act, sections 307(c) & (d); Contamination and Toxic Substances [24 CFR Part 50.3(i) & 58.5(i)(2)]; Endangered Species Act of 1973, particularly section 7; 50 CFR Part 402; Floodplain Management [Executive Order 11988, particularly section 2(a); 24 CFR Part 55]; Historic Preservation [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, particularly sections 106 and 110; 36 CFR Part 800]; Noise Abatement and Control [Noise Control Act of 1972, as amended by the Quiet Communities Act of 1978; 24 CFR Part 51 Subpart B].

Mitigation Measures/Conditions/Permits (if any):

- **Flood Insurance:** If a home is in a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area, it will undergo further evaluation if flood insurance is required for the property or if the property is not eligible for program assistance.
- **Coastal Zone Management:** If a home is located in a coastal zone, the grantee will consult with the state coastal commission to determine if project activities are subject to state review. The grantee will obtain a federal consistency determination from the state coastal commission detailing any necessary mitigation.
- **Contamination and Toxic Substances:** The grantee will review publicly available records such as the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) Remediation Information Data Exchange (RIDE) database, EPA Superfund National Priorities, and CERCLA List. If evidence of contamination at the property is identified the contamination shall be mitigated or remediated under the guidance of the appropriate state agency. For homes constructed prior to 1978, the home will undergo the appropriate lead-based paint evaluation and be subject to appropriate mitigation measures to reach compliance with the HUD Lead Safe Housing Rule. An asbestos inspection will be completed in areas where renovation activities are planned. If asbestos is identified, mitigation measures will be developed to be in compliance with the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- **Endangered Species:** For properties which the project activities include roofing, landscaping, or hazardous tree removal, grantees will review the endangered species listed in their area and consult with FWS if the project actions will adversely affect them.
- **Floodplain Management:** If the project occurs in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain, the grantee must work with a floodplain specialist to determine whether the 8-step decision-making process, the 5-step decision making process, or neither process applies to be in compliance with this Executive Order.
- **Historic Preservation:** A Section 106 review must be completed to determine the potential effect on historic properties. If the project is determined to have adverse of effect on historic properties, consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects. If adverse effects cannot be mitigated, the applicable party may be removed from the project.
- **Noise Abatement and Control:** If a preliminary screening identifies potential noise generators in the vicinity of the home a noise assessment will occur. If the noise assessment documents an unacceptable noise exposure, mitigation measures will be implemented to eliminate the adverse noise impacts.

Estimated Project Cost: $7,026,000.00

The activity/activities proposed are categorically excluded under HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements per *24 CFR Part 58.35(a)(3)(i)***. An Environmental Review Record (ERR) that documents the environmental determinations for this project is on file at** MSHDA's Lansing and Detroit offices (735 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI 48912 and 3028 W Grand Blvd, Detroit, MI 48202) **and maybe examined or copied weekdays 8A.M to 5P.M.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to the MSHDA *Neighborhood Development Division***. All comments received by** *March 5* **will be considered by the** *MSHDA* **prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

MSHDA certifies to *HUD* **that** *Anthony Lentych***, Certifying Officer, in** *his* **capacity as** *Chief Housing Investment Officer* **consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied.** *HUD's* **approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the** *regional housing partnerships in MSHDA's region J* **to use HUD program funds.**

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD **will accept objections to its release of fund and the** *MSHDA* **certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the** *MSHDA*; **(b) the** *MSHDA* **has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by** *HUD*; **or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to** *HUD* **at** *477 Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor Detroit, Michigan 48226-2592***. Potential objectors should contact** *HUD* **to verify the actual last day of the objection period.**

Anthony Lentych, Chief Housing Investment Officer, Certifying Officer

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